



Irish Glossary

Compiled by

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Glossary of Irish Words and Expressions

When I discovered the novels of Marian Keyes and Maeve Binchy, I was entranced by the Irish idioms and expressions they used, and sought out even more books by Irish authors. As I began writing my own novels and stories set in Ireland, I started a list of the Irish expressions I particularly enjoyed, so I could include a few in my books. To help out my readers, I'd add a mini-glossary of Irish words at the front of my books, with an emphasis on "mini."

As the years went by, and I read even more Irish literature, I amassed more and more loose pages of my handwritten glossary. Then I had an epiphany...instead of including only a brief list of Irish words in my books, why not type up all the expressions I'd collected and share them with other fans of Irish books!

You might have seen lots of these expressions in books by English or Scottish authors as well—the people of the British Isles share lots of the same language traditions. Keep in mind that with some words, I've had to guess a bit with the translation, but I've given all my interpretations my best shot. In any event, I extend a big thanks to all the Irish authors I've read for their inspiration, and helping me "flavor" my stories with Irish speech!

A head on someone: hangover

Arse: impolite terms for backside

Article: sometimes a thing and other times a person

As the humor takes a person: as the mood takes them

Away off: don't be stupid

Banjaxed: damaged, injured

Barney: fight

Be a number: dating someone

Bin it: throw something away

Blogger: faker, blusterer, braggart

Blarney: silly or useless talk

Blether: useless talk or annoying speech

Bletherskite: a person who talks a lot of blether

Bloody-minded: cranky, difficult, being contrary

Bollocks: a jerk; also getting a bollacking: chewed out

Bonnet of a car: hood

Boot of a car: trunk

Chemist: pharmacist

Chips: French fries, crisps are potato chips

Clobber: a bunch of stuff

Cod: a lie

Come out in a rash, pimples, etc: break out

Cop on to something: get over something, get a grip

Corker: very special

Cot: child's crib

Crackers: a crazy or nutty person. Keeping in mind that Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw called Ireland "the largest outdoor insane asylum in the world," there are so many Irish expressions for "crazy" you have lots of options!

A nutter

Bats

Loopy

Daft, which is a little less crazy

Also, not full-on crazy but maybe just sort of out of it: Not the full shilling, away with the fairies, away in the head, gone in the head, unraveled in the head

Craic (Irish Gaelic) or crack: fun, great time

Dead on: absolutely right

Dear: expensive

Desperate: terrible

Dodgy: uncertain, broken

Dote: a fun person, adorable, a sweetheart

Dozer/no dozer: stupid person/smart person

Eejit: an idiot, stupid

Fair play to you: good for you!

Feck: the Irish version of the “F-bomb” but used so frequently it’s lost all shock value!

Flex: electrical plug-in cord

Flog: a hard sell, pushing a product

Footpath: sidewalk

Gammy: gimp

Give over!: Come on! Or, you’ve got to be kidding

Giving out: yelling, shouting, complaining

Giving someone gyp: giving them a problem

Gobshite: bad or offensive person, a jerk

Gom: dorky person

Good form: good mood

Guff: chat, blarney

Hoovering: using the vacuum cleaner

In shreds: upset

In the nip: naked

It’s a good job that...: it’s a good thing, it’s fortunate

It’s not on: it won’t work

Kip: a shack, run-down dwelling

Knackered: fatigued, tired

Leg it, or do a legger: run off

Lip: being sassy or cheeky

Lughnasadh: pronounced “loonasa.” Harvest festival celebrated on the Sunday closest to August 1st, in honor of the god Luch (pronounced “loo”)

Make sport of: make fun of

Making a Haimies of something: making a big mess

Mean: cheap, cheapskate

Naff: low-class

Never!: you’re kidding

Nicked: stolen

Not at him/herself: unwell

Pants: underpants, not to be confused with trousers

Pissed: drunk, inebriated

Power/powerful: very strong or a LOT

Restful on the eye: mostly refers to a woman, as in good-looking

Ride: a really attractive or sexually hot person

Row: argument

Runners: sneakers

Sacked: fired from a job

Scarper, also do a runner: take off

Scuppered: screwed up

Scattered, also jarred: tipsy, drunk; A little scut: a jerk, twerp

Shag, also having it off: have sex

Shag: also broken, or no good

Shamming: putting something on, or putting on airs

Slag: criticize, rake over the coals

Slainte: pronounced “slawntah” or “slawncha.” Cheers, or to your health

Sling it: forget it

Snogging: kissing or making out

Stand a round: pay for a round of drinks

Stone: measurement of weight, one stone = 14 pounds

Strop: tantrum, a fit

Sussed: found out

Swizz: cheat

Thick: stupid

Thrash: beat up

Tosser: loser

Trolley: grocery cart

Twigged: caught on

Wee man: the devil

Yoke: thing, thingamabob, an unidentifiable item

You can find more fun Irish stuff at www.susancolleenbrowne.com !